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Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application, and are rejected in the final Office Action of July 16, 2007. No claim amendments are presented in this response. However, for the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the pending claims accompanies this response.

Re: Rejection of Claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 1225516 to Jahnke et al. (hereinafter, "Jahnke") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,987,458 issued to Anderson et al. (hereinafter, "Anderson"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Applicants first note that independent claims 1, 10 and 11 include:

"wherein the information describing the descriptor structure includes an indicator for a hierarchical level of at least one of the portions of the plurality of common formats within the descriptors"

On pages 3-4 of the final Office Action dated July 16, 2007, the Examiner first alleges that Jahnke discloses the above-quoted feature of independent claims 1, 10 and 11, and thereafter admits that Jahnke does not. Accordingly, Applicants assume there are typographical errors on present on pages 3-4 of the final Office Action. Nonetheless, Applicants submit that neither Jahnke nor Anderson, whether taken individually or in combination, teach or suggest, *inter alia*, the above-quoted feature of independent claims 1, 10 and 11.

First, with respect to Jahnke, the Examiner alleges that the indicator "Id" shown in paragraph [0035] of the reference is an indicator for a hierarchical level of at least one of the portions of the plurality of common formats within the descriptors. Applicants respectfully disagree. As can clearly be seen in paragraph [0033] of Jahnke, the three elements designated by <Element name = "1"...>, <Element name = "2"...>, and <Element name = "3"...> are on the same hierarchical level, in this case the level

relative to <Example> on level 0. Still, in the element table of paragraph [0035] they have different values "Id". Consequently, the indicator "Id" does not designate the hierarchical level of the portions of the common format. Therefore, contrary to the Examiner's allegation, Jahnke does not teach or suggest that the information describing the descriptor structure includes an indicator for a hierarchical level of at least one of the portions of the plurality of common formats within the descriptors.

Anderson is unable to remedy the aforementioned deficiency of Jahnke. As best understood, the Examiner ostensibly alleges on page 4 of the final Office Action that Anderson shows that the descriptor structure includes an indicator for a hierarchical level of at least one of the portions of the plurality of common formats within the descriptors. Applicants respectfully disagree. Although FIG. 5 of Anderson refers to a relational database, contrary to the present invention each level of hierarchy uses its own hierarchy table irrespective of the type of element. In other words, each hierarchy table of Anderson includes different types of elements. The relationships between the elements of the database are embodied by pointers indicating an element within the next lower or the next upper hierarchy. This is completely different from the relations according to the present invention, where each relation includes a single type of element. In other words, each relation of the present invention contains a plurality of elements of the same type, but with different levels of hierarchy. The relationships between the elements of the database are embodied by indicators indicating the position of a next upper hierarchical portion of the plurality of common formats. As a consequence, Anderson does not have any need to include an indicator for a hierarchical level of at least one of the portions of the plurality of common formats within the descriptors, as claimed. Also, the pointers referenced as indicators by the Examiner do not indicate a hierarchical level of an element. Rather, they simply point to an element in a different hierarchy table.

Even assuming, *arguendo*, that a person skilled in the art would consider using the pointer approach of Anderson in combination with the solution of Jahnke, he would thus not arrive at the solution according to the present invention. In particular, the

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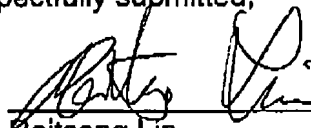
solution according to the present invention has the advantage that by indicating a hierarchical level of a portion of the plurality of comment formats, as well as a position of a next upper hierarchical portion of the plurality of common formats, it becomes easily possible to recover a part of a descriptor when only the position of a portion of a common format is known (e.g., as a query result). In contrast, with the proposed combination of Jahnke and Anderson, the descriptor has to be recovered up to the top level of hierarchy to obtain sufficient information about the hierarchy within the descriptor.

In view of the foregoing remarks/arguments, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 10 and 11 and their respective dependent claims are patentable over the proposed combination of Jahnke and Anderson and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks/arguments, Applicants believe that this application stands in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully solicited. If, however, the Examiner is of the opinion that such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' attorney at (609) 734-6813, so that a mutually convenient date and time for a telephonic interview may be scheduled. No fee is believed due. However, if a fee is due, please charge the fee to Deposit Account 07-0832.

Respectfully submitted,


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